

Legislative News



March 5, 2010

New Higher Education Bills:

[HB 2261 Kraus](#) (D-Lees Summit)
Exempts students who are dependants of retired military from the three-year attendance requirement under the A+ Program when certain conditions are met.

[HB 2278 Hobbs](#) (R-Mexico)
Increases the cap on awards granted to investigators by the University of Missouri board of curators.

[SB 1057 Shields](#) (R-St. Joseph)
Requires the Commissioner of the Office of Administration to issue a report to the General Assembly by December 31, 2010, in consultation with the directors of each state department, that analyzes programs within every department that should be eliminated, reduced or combined with another program or programs.

[SJR 44 Shields](#) (R-St. Joseph)
Proposes a constitutional amendment to eliminate each state department within the executive branch

Returning Heroes' Education Act

A bill that would make changes in the Missouri Returning Heroes' Education Act made further progress in the House this week. [HB 1504](#), filed by [Representative Rob Schaaf](#), which extends eligibility for this program to include individuals who served in armed combat before September 11, 2001, was voted do pass from the [House Higher Education Committee](#) on Wednesday.

Senate Education Committee Hears and Votes on Several Bills

The [Senate Education Committee](#) held a marathon session on Wednesday of this week, apparently trying to get their desks cleaned off before the Senate adjourns for legislative spring break. The committee heard testimony about [Senator Wes Shoemyer's SB 963](#), which would transfer a scholarship currently assigned to DNR to the MDHE, and [Senator David Pearce's SB 936](#), which would create a matching grant program to encourage public colleges and universities to engage in various activities that promote science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Committee members had few questions about either bill.

The committee also considered whether to vote several bills out of committee. They approved [Senator Frank Barnitz' SB 939](#), which would change the way the MDHE calculates inflation for purposes of the [Higher Education Student Funding Act](#), and [SB 963](#), which would transfer a scholarship (as described above). They also discussed [Senator Scott Rupp's SB 907](#), which would create a scholarship for students who graduate from high school early. The committee decided not to vote on the bill on Wednesday, but they will likely revisit it after spring break.

Scholarship Transfer Moves Forward

This week, House and Senate bills that would move the Minority and Underrepresented Environmental Literacy Program from the [Department of Natural Resources](#) to the [Department of Higher Education](#) moved forward. The program provides scholarships to full-time minority and underrepresented students who pursue a bachelor's or master's degree in an environmental-related field of study at a Missouri college or university.

[HB 1858](#), filed by [Representative Jake Zimmerman](#) was voted do pass from the [House Conservation and Natural Resources Committee](#) on Wednesday and referred to the [House Rules Committee](#). [SB 963](#), filed by [Senator Wes Shoemyer](#), was voted do pass from the [Senate Education](#)

[Committee](#) on Wednesday and recommended for the Senate Consent Calendar.



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Budget Update

The major budget news this week was the release of the House Committee Substitutes (HCS) for budget bills including [HB 2003](#). The HCS has some significant changes from the recommendations made by the [Education Appropriations Committee](#).

The biggest change was a reduction of \$13 million in the [Access Missouri Program](#). This amount is equal to the FY 2010 expenditure restriction, meaning that the HCS amount for Access will be the same as the actual spending for FY 2010. The HCS also includes a \$9 million increase for [Bright Flight](#). It is estimated that this amount will fully fund the statutory changes that will be in effect for FY 2011. These changes are an increase in the maximum award for students scoring in the top 3 percentiles to

\$3,000 and a new award of \$1,000 for students scoring in the top fourth and fifth percentiles.

The HCS also reduces the [A+ Program](#) appropriation by \$2.7 million, which represents the anticipated lapse in that program primarily due to the increase in the federal Pell Grant program. This reduction also assumes that there will not be a statutory change to expand the program to all high schools under the Missouri Promise proposal. The HCS does not include the \$1 million increase for [MOREnet](#) or the \$300,000 increase for the [Missouri Kidney Program](#) that were included in the Education Appropriations Committee recommen-



Legislature Considering Big Changes

[Senate President Pro Tem Charlie Shields](#) is leading an effort to rethink – and probably dramatically reduce – state government. He has filed [SB 1057](#), which would require the [Office of Administration](#) to submit a report to the legislature by the end of the year. The report would include an analysis of programs in all state departments that should be eliminated, reduced, or combined with other programs. The analysis would be based on information provided by departments about potential efficiencies; programs that could be eliminated, reduced, or combined; and a plan for reducing FY 2012 expenditures by 5-25% compared to FY 2011.

Senator Shields has also filed [SJR 44](#), which would put a measure on the ballot allowing voters to consider a measure amending the state constitution to remove language listing the departments within the executive branch.

Finally, Shields is inviting citizens to submit suggestions about how to “reboot state government” through increased control, alterations, or deletions. The Senate website now contains a portal through which Missourians can make suggestions: <http://www.senate.mo.gov/RebootMO/RebootMO.aspx>.

New CBHE Board Member Confirmed

The Governor's nominee for the [Coordinating Board for Higher Education](#), Craig Van Matre, was confirmed by the Senate this week. During his appearance before the [Senate gubernatorial appointments committee](#), the committee asked Van Matre several questions, and offered some advice. [Senator Jason Crowell](#) inquired on how Van Matre would help the committee meet communities' need for access to low-cost community

college services. In response, Van Matre emphasized his willingness to learn the more about all of the issues and help higher education face challenges that arise, including extremely stressed budgets. [Senator Norma Champion](#) took the opportunity in the meeting to call on Van Matre and the rest of the CBHE to put forth a plan for strengthening their ability to coordinate higher education throughout the state of Missouri.

Senator Champion also reminded everyone to look at issues in terms of students' needs — and in terms of colleges' and universities' needs. Overall, Van Matre's appearance before the committee went very smoothly. He was approved by the full Senate Thursday, and he is now set to begin his work as a member of the CHBE.

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Access Missouri Bill Heard in the House

The [House Higher Education Committee](#) heard testimony about [Representative Gayle Kingery's HB 1812](#) on Monday of this week. Students from public and private colleges packed the hearing room to tell their stories and advocate for or against changes in [Access Missouri](#) award amounts. Students from public schools, including many students representing the [Associated Students of the University of Missouri](#), or ASUM, described the impact that additional scholarship money could have on their lives. They pointed out that there is a significant difference between award amounts for students at public and private schools, and questioned the rationality of a system that rewards students for choosing a costlier option.

Students from private schools, many of whom are part of the [Keep Me In College](#) coalition, told committee members how important it has been

for them to have the option of attending a private school, and how essential state financial aid is in allowing them to do so. They also testified about the amount of support that students receive through public colleges' and universities' operating budgets, indicating that the overall amount of support received by students at private schools is less than the support received by students at public schools.

The committee did not vote on the HB 1812 this week. They will likely do so the next time the committee meets – March 16, after legislators return from spring break.

On the Senate side, the [Senate Education Committee](#) has approved [SB 778](#), which is nearly identical to [HB 1812](#). The bill has not, however, been reported out of committee.



Legislative Spring Break

The legislature will be on spring break next week so there will not be a Legislative News or Legislative Update on March 12. The legislature will resume normal activities on Monday, March 15.

Upcoming Committee Meetings

The [House Higher Education Committee](#) will meet for an executive session on Tuesday, March 16 at 12:00 p.m. in HR 1. The committee is expected to vote on the following bills:

[Rep. Gale Kingery's HB 1812](#), which changes the Access Missouri award amounts.

[Rep. Denny Hoskins' HCR 24](#), which encourages students and faculty to promote international education at Missouri colleges and universities.

The [House Budget Committee](#) will meet on the following dates: Monday, March 15 at 9:00 a.m. in HR 3; Tuesday, March 16 at 8:00 a.m. in HR3; Wednesday, March 17 upon morning adjournment in HR3; and Thursday, March 18 at 8:00 a.m. in HR3. The committee will hear bills including:

[Representative Alan Icet's HB 2003](#) which appropriates money for the expenses, grants, refunds, and distributions of the Department of Higher Education.

The [House Veterans Committee](#) will meet on Tuesday, March 16 at 12:00 p.m. in HR 2. The committee is expected to hear the following bills:

[Rep. Will Kraus's HB 2261](#), which exempts students who are dependents of retired military from three-year attendance requirement under the A+ Program when certain conditions are met.

[Rep. Dan Brown's HB 2147](#), which exempts students who are dependents of retired military from three-year attendance requirement under the A+ Program when certain conditions are met.